CLAIMS:

1.          A method for driving multiple applications ($A_1$, $A_2$, $A_3$, ..., $A_n$) by a common dialog management system (1) where a unique set of auditory icons ($S_1$, $S_2$, $S_3$, ..., $S_n$) is assigned to each application ($A_1$, $A_2$, $A_3$, ..., $A_n$), and where the common dialog management system (1) informs a user () of the status of an application ($A_1$, $A_2$, $A_3$, ..., $A_n$) by playback, at a specific point in a dialog flow, of a relevant auditory icon ($I_1$, $I_2$, $I_3$, ..., $I_n$) selected from the unique set of auditory icons ($S_1$, $S_2$, $S_3$, ..., $S_n$) of the respective application ($A_1$, $A_2$, $A_3$, ..., $A_n$).

2.          A method according claim 1, where the auditory icons ($I_1$, $I_2$, $I_3$, ..., $I_n$) of an application ($A_1$, $A_2$, $A_3$, ..., $A_n$) are played back to indicate to the user a change in operational status of an application ($A_1$, $A_2$, $A_3$, ..., $A_n$).

3.          A method according to claim 1 or claim 2, where an application ($A_1$, $A_2$, $A_3$, ..., $A_n$) submits a set of auditory icons ($S_1$, $S_2$, $S_3$, ..., $S_n$) and associated instructions concerning the use thereof to the dialog management system (1).

4.          A method according to claim 3, where identifying information for the individual auditory icons ($I_1$, $I_2$, $I_3$, ..., $I_n$) of an application ($A_1$, $A_2$, $A_3$, ..., $A_n$) and associated instructions are obtained by the dialog management system (1), and the auditory icons ($I_1$, $I_2$, $I_3$, ..., $I_n$) are retrieved by the dialog management system (1), from the application ($A_1$, $A_2$, $A_3$, ..., $A_n$) upon request.

5.          A method according to claim 3, where the complete set of auditory icons ($S_1$, $S_2$, $S_3$, ..., $S_n$) of an application ($A_1$, $A_2$, $A_3$, ..., $A_n$) is acquired by the dialog management system (1) at the outset of a dialog flow between the user and the application ($A_1$, $A_2$, $A_3$, ..., $A_n$) or upon activation or installation of the application ($A_1$,

$A_2$, $A_3$, ..., $A_n$).

6.          A method according to any of the preceding claims, where the dialog management system (1) supplies an application ($A_1$, $A_2$, $A_3$, ..., $A_n$) with a unique set of auditory icons ($S_1$, $S_2$, $S_3$, ..., $S_n$), by modifying non-unique auditory icons ($I_1$, $I_2$, $I_3$, ..., $I_n$) in a set of auditory icons ($S_1$, $S_2$, $S_3$, ..., $S_n$) of the application ($A_1$, $A_2$, $A_3$, ..., $A_n$) and/or choosing unique auditory icons ($I_1$, $I_2$, $I_3$, ..., $I_n$) for the application ($A_1$, $A_2$, $A_3$, ..., $A_n$) from a collection (13) of auditory icons.

7.          A method according to any of the preceding claims, where the set of auditory icons ($S_1$, $S_2$, $S_3$, ..., $S_n$) for playback in a dialog flow between a user and an application ($A_1$, $A_2$, $A_3$, ..., $A_n$) comprises at least one unique start auditory icon, for playback at commencement of the dialog flow and/or at least one unique end auditory icon, for playback at conclusion of a dialog flow.

8.          A method according to any of the preceding claims, where the set of auditory icons ($S_1$, $S_2$, $S_3$, ..., $S_n$) for playback in a dialog flow between a user and an application ($A_1$, $A_2$, $A_3$, ..., $A_n$) comprises a number of unique informative auditory icons ($I_1$, $I_2$, $I_3$, ..., $I_n$), for playback at specific points during the dialog flow where each auditory icon ($I_1$, $I_2$, $I_3$, ..., $I_n$) describes a particular type of feedback from the application ($A_1$, $A_2$, $A_3$, ..., $A_n$).

9.          A method according to any of the preceding claims, where auditory icons ($I_1$, $I_2$, $I_3$, ..., $I_n$) and/or playback characteristics of the auditory icons ($I_1$, $I_2$, $I_3$, ..., $I_n$) are specified for a user in a user profile (3).

10.          A dialog management system (1) for driving a number of applications ($A_1$, $A_2$, $A_3$, ..., $A_n$), comprising
-          an input detection arrangement (4) for detecting user input (5) to the system;
-          a sound output arrangement (6) for outputting audible prompt (7) ;

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    -      a core dialog engine (8) for coordinating a dialog flow by interpreting user input (5) and generating output prompts ();

    -      an application interface (10) for communication between the dialog management system (1) and the applications ($A_1$, $A_2$, $A_3$, ..., $A_n$);

5    -      a source of unique sets of auditory icons ($S_1$, $S_2$, $S_3$, ..., $S_n$) assigned to the applications ($A_1$, $A_2$, $A_3$, ..., $A_n$);

    -      and an auditory icon management unit (11) for selecting relevant auditory icons ($I_1$, $I_2$, $I_3$, ..., $I_n$) from the unique sets of auditory icons ($S_1$, $S_2$, $S_3$, ..., $S_n$) corresponding to the applications ($A_1$, $A_2$, $A_3$, ..., $A_n$)

10          for playback at specific points in the dialog flow.

11.      A dialog management system (1) according to claim 11, comprising a means (15) for allowing the user to input auditory icons ($I_1$, $I_2$, $I_3$, ..., $I_n$).

15  12.      A dialog management system (1) according to claim 11 or claim 12, comprising an interface (14) for obtaining sets of auditory icons ($S_1$, $S_2$, $S_3$, ..., $S_n$) or individual auditory icons ($I_1$, $I_2$, $I_3$, ..., $I_n$) from an external source (12)

13.      A computer program product directly loadable into the memory of a

20  programmable dialog management system (1) comprising software code portions for performing the steps of a method according to claims 1 to 10 when said product is run on the dialog management system (1).

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